

## My Turn

# A letter to Taos Ski Valley officials

James G. Stuart

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My name is Jim Stuart. I am honored to be a studio owner at the esteemed St. Bernard Condominiums for the last 12 years.

Regarding development plans and designs within the core of the new village; specifically:

- n Increasing the height of the buildings to 50 feet above grade (perhaps more).

- n Throughway road to the Burroughs property.

- n Negative impacts to the village community, which itself is the core of the recognized TSV brand, reputation, and value proposition.

Certainly there is room for updating and enhancing our European village charm, while retaining community elements that define the brand experience; but TSV must not pursue Colorado-like 'turista' expansionism, as has been the case at Steamboat, Estes Park, Vail, etc.; especially when the beneficiaries mainly want to take skin "out" of the game.

What TSV doesn't need are unrealistic development plans by non-resident speculative developers motivated by profit ambition; reverse engineered to investment return requirements; requiring 50-plus-foot building heights to make their P&Ls viable; resulting in rapid growth and 'product' homogeneity; and a "reduced" capacity to deliver increased services; for a poorer quality experience; which when they fail will further collapse TSV's fragile economic and cultural balancing act.

For reasons well-known TSV has historically thwarted many similar schemes. It seems particularly risky to consider these jeopardies when the outlook for economic recovery from the current global downturn already is past the year 2020 horizon; and then only if the looming European debt crises doesn't crash us all again soon.

TSV is one of a very few last havens of 'genuity' (i.e. the real deal; having genuine character). To protect this hard-won success (and branding) we should emulate the organic scaling of enhancement plans adopted by more sustainable communities, such as Boulder, Aspen, Moab, and Sedona.

I encourage the council and relevant committees to resist the lure of the quick revenue carrot; proffered by enthusiastic lobbyist/applicants to alleviate the never-ending, inexorable, and exhausting demand for funds to cover village services, staffing, and facilities.

TSV has got it about right to date, but these proposals would be a departure towards the wrong.

Respectfully submitted for your consideration with warm regards.

*Jim Stuart is a resident of Taos Ski Valley.*